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Israeli Schools in Hezbollah Firing Line Won't Open in September, Education Minister Says

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Latest Developments

Schooling will be **disrupted** for a second straight year in communities on Israel's northern border with Lebanon as Hezbollah attacks continue, Israeli education minister Yoav Kisch said on July 23.

A day after Hamas launched its war on Israel from Gaza on October 7, Hezbollah joined in with shelling attacks on the north of the country, driving tens of thousands of residents from their homes. Indications from **Hezbollah** that it would hold fire in the event of a truce in Gaza, along with the renewal of mediated talks between Israel and Hamas, led the Israeli government to suggest that evacuees could be returned in time for the new school year on September 1. However, Kisch's announcement confirmed that schools within the range of the Hezbollah attacks would remain shuttered indefinitely and that evacuee children would instead continue studying where they have been relocated.

"This is a regrettable decision that has been forced upon us and is being made with heavy heart," Kisch said in a statement, calling on the government to deal with the Hezbollah threat from Lebanon "to restore quiet and stability for residents of the north, and for the sake of the State of Israel's future."

Expert Analysis

"Hezbollah's strategic victory in this conflict has been to create a de facto 'security zone,' purged of civilian life, within Israeli territory. That is proving more painful and protracted than expected. The Israelis have adapted by moving their citizenry to safety even as they whittle Hezbollah's ranks with precision strikes. On balance, the former can clearly outlast the latter, and being relieved of the September 1 deadline may in fact give Israel breathing room to ensure whatever accommodation emerges in Gaza is advantageous." — ***Mark Dubowitz**, FDD CEO*

"Following the October 7 Hamas-led terrorist attack, Israeli officials have consistently emphasized their intolerance for Hezbollah's presence along its northern border. The delay in the start of the school year suggests that Israel may be preparing for a prolonged conflict in the north until the Jewish state can ensure a safe environment for civilians to return home. This decision underscores Israel's commitment to protect its citizens and secure its borders against Hezbollah's persistent threats." — ***Joe Truzman**, Senior Research Analyst at FDD's Long War Journal*

Education Ministry Presents Plan for Displaced Students

More than 60,000 civilians, including 14,600 children, have been displaced from their homes in Israel due to Hezbollah's attacks, *The Times of Israel* **reported**. At a meeting between Kisch and local authority chiefs, Haim Bibas, the chair of the Federation of Local Authorities, said that the education minister had been briefed on a range of concerns voiced by regional authorities in recent months. The federation added that Kisch had presented a NIS 152 million plan for alternate schools for the affected students, enabling them to attend classes in a more familiar environment.

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